

Message Text

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AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 17053

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: ANDREOTTI AND ZACCAGNINI OFFER CONTRASTING VIEWS ON
PCI-PSI IDEOLOGICAL DEBATE

SUMMARY. THE DC NATIONAL FRIENDSHIP FESTA AT PESCARA,
SEPTEMBER 2-10, PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DC LEADERS TO
OFFER JUDGEMENTS ON THE INCREASINGLY BITTER IDEOLOGICAL
DEBATE BETWEEN THE PCI AND PSI. CLEARLY EXPRESSING
CONCERN THAT DETERIORATING PCI-PSI RELATIONS COULD
WEAKEN HIS GOVERNMENT, ANDREOTTI WARNED THE PSI NOT TO
CARRY ITS ANTI-PCI POLEMIC TOO FAR. THE DC, ANDREOTTI
SAID, DOES NOT WANT A SPLIT IN THE LEFT. PARTY PRESIDENT
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PICCOLI AND SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI, HOWEVER, OFFERED A
MORE NUANCED VIEW, ARGUING THAT THE DEBATE IS USEFUL IN
GETTING THE PCI TO COME TO GRIPS MORE "EXPLICITLY" WITH
ITS PAST. ALTHOUGH BOTH CAUTIONED AGAINST
"EXPLOITING" THE DEBATE IN THE LEFT, PICCOLI AND
ZACCAGNINI DID NOT HESITATE TO CRITICIZE THE PCI IN
STRONG TERMS FOR "EQUIVOCATIONS" AND UNEVENNESS IN

DEALING WITH LENINISM WHICH THEY SAID WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH A "DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN THE EUROPEAN SENSE". WE ARE STRUCK BY THE LENGTHS TO WHICH ANDREOTTI WENT IN DEFENDING THE PCI AGAINST THE PSI'S ATTACK AS WELL AS ZACCAGNINI'S APPARENT SHIFT FROM THE LEFT TO A MIDDLE COURSE ON THE PCI-PSI ISSUE. AS THE DC FACTIONS GATHER IN COMING WEEKS TO DISCUSS STRATEGY IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT SPRING'S PARTY CONGRESS, ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PSI WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE A FOCAL POINT OF THE DEBATE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DC'S TEN-DAY NATIONAL FRIENDSHIP FESTIVAL AT PESCARA, PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTY LEADERS TO OFFER JUDGEMENTS ON THE INCREASINGLY BITTER IDEOLOGICAL DEBATE BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS OVER THE NATURE OF THE PCI. THE FUED HAS TORN APART ALL PRETENSE OF THE POLITICAL UNITY OF THE LEFT, RAISING CONCERN FOR THE STABILITY OF THE PRESENT GOVERNING MAJORITY.

2. FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS THE DC'S REACTION TO THE PSI'S AUTONOMOUS COURSE RANGES FROM CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM TO UNDISGUISED APPREHENSION. FOR ONE THING, THE MEMORY OF THE DC'S RECENT BITTER EXPERIENCE WITH THE PSI (PARTICULARLY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL) REMAINS VIVID. CRITICISM OF THE PCI HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY FEW TANGIBLE SIGNS OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE DC. ALTHOUGH LESS VEHEMENT IN CONFIDENTIAL

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TONE, CRAXI'S BARBS ARE ALSO DIRECTED AGAINST THE DC. DC-LEFT LEADERS PARTICULARLY RESENT CRAXI'S ATTEMPTS TO PIN A CONSERVATIVE LABEL ON THE DC, FEARING THAT THE PSI'S LEFT-INDEPENDENT COURSE IS REALLY AIMED AT WOOLING CATHOLIC-LEFT VOTES AWAY FROM THE DC. OTHERS ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PSI'S INHERENTLY RADICAL BENT WILL ALWAYS MAKE THEM AN UNRELIABLE POLITICAL PARTNER OF THE DC. AT LEAST OVER THE SHORT TERM, ONE OF THE MAIN FEARS IS THAT THE PSI'S SPOILING ACTIVITIES ARE DANGEROUSLY DESTABILIZING AND COULD PROVOKE AN UNWANTED POLITICAL CRISIS.

3. IT IS THIS LAST CONCERN THAT CLEARLY WEIGHS MOST HEAVILY ON PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S MIND. SPEAKING TO THE PRESS AT PESCARA ON SEPTEMBER 8, ANDREOTTI WENT FURTHER THAN ANY DC LEADER IN WARNING THE PSI NOT TO CARRY ITS ANTI-PCI POLEMIC TOO FAR. ANDREOTTI SAID THAT "TO US IT SEEMS IMPORTANT THAT THE EVER CLOSER IDENTIFICATION OF ITALIAN SOCIALISM WITH THE EUROPEAN MODEL SHOULD ACT, NOT AS AN ELEMENT OF RUPTURE IN THE LEFT, BUT RATHER AS A VALID STIMULUS FOR THE COMMUNISTS TO CONTINUE THEIR CRITICAL REVISION." ANDREOTTI WENT ON TO SAY THAT "WE DO NOT ALL WANT TO SEE A SPLIT IN THE

LEFT". EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THE PCI WILL ONE DAY BE FULLY DEMOCRATIC TO PERMIT THE LEFT TO OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT TO THE DC, ANDREOTTI STARTLED MANY IN THE DC BY SAYING THAT "THE DAY WHEN THIS IS POSSIBLE WILL BE GREETED WITH JOY BY THE DC." COMMENT: DC SOURCES AT PESCARA TOLD US THEY FELT ANDREOTTI WENT MUCH FURTHER THAN NECESSARY IN DEFENDING THE PCI; MANY WERE HIGHLY CRITICAL. INTERESTINGLY, THE ZACCAGNINI-CONTROLLED DC DAILY, IL POPOLO, DCC NOT REPORT ANDREOTTI'S REMARKS ON THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY OF THE LEFT. END COMMENT.

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4. THE NEXT DAY, SEPTEMBER 9, DC PRESIDENT PICCOLI REDRESSED THE DC'S POSITION BY OFFERING A MORE NUANCED JUDGEMENT ON THE PSI-PCI SQUABBLE. THE IDEOLOGICAL DEBATE, IN PICCOLI'S VIEW, WAS USEFUL AND ON THE WHOLE POSITIVE. HE ALLOWED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PSI'S OBJECTIVES WERE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. "SOONER OR LATER", THE PCI WOULD HAVE TO CLARIFY TWO POINTS (ITS TIES WITH THE USSR AND DEMOCRATIC-CENTRALISM) BEFORE IT COULD BE CALLED "A DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN THE EUROPEAN SENSE". UNTIL THE PCI

FORDED THAT STREAM, THE DC WOULD CONTINUE TO EXCLUDE PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT WITH THE PCI.

5. BEFORE AN ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD OF 50,000 ON SEPTEMBER
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10, THE CONCLUDING DAY OF THE DC'S FESTA, DC SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI ALSO SHOWED NO QUALMS AGAINST CRITICIZING THE PCI STRONGLY FOR ITS UNEVEN ("EPISODIC") PROGRESS TOWARD DEMOCRATIZATION. ALTHOUGH HE TOO WARNED AGAINST EXPLOITING THE DEBATE, ZACCAGNINI UPHELD THE VALIDITY OF THE DIALOGUE BECAUSE "LENINISM IS NOT RECONCILABLE WITH PLURALISM AND DEMOCRACY." ADDRESSING THE PCI IN HARSHER TERMS THAN ONE RECALLS OF ZACCAGNINI LATELY, THE PARTY LEADER CALLED ON THE PCI "TO COME TO GRIPS MORE EXPLICITLY WITH ITS PAST" SO THAT ITS STATEMENTS "DO NOT FEED EQUIVOCATIONS, MAKING ITS IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL REVISION LESS CREDIBLE." AND HINTING THAT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS COULD LEAD TO EVENTUAL CHANGES IN THE PRESENT GOVERNING ARRANGEMENTS, ZACCAGNINI SAID THAT THE "DC IS NOT INDIFFERENT TO THE ONGOING DEBATE IN THE LEFT BECAUSE IT IS INTERESTED IN ALL THE ITALIAN POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES."

6. COMMENT: IF ALL DC LEADERS CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNING ARRANGEMENTS IS THE ONLY ONE POSSIBLE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, THERE IS NO CLEAR VIEW AS TO HOW THE PARTY SHOULD PREPARE ITSELF FOR THE CHOICES IT WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO MAKE. AS THE POLITICAL SEASON WARMS UP ONCE AGAIN, MEETINGS OF THE DC PARTY FACTIONS WILL BE HELD OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS TO ASSESS THE CURRENT SITUATION AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES IN PREPARATION FOR THE DC'S NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS IN THE SPRING. WHAT THE DC'S ATTITUDE SHOULD BE TOWARD THE PSI WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE A FOCAL POINT OF THE ONGOING DEBATE. SOME, LIKE ANDREOTTI, WILL WARN AGAINST UPSETTING THE PRESENT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE PCI. IN THE PAST, ZACCAGNINI HAS OFTEN ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH THIS DC-LEFT VIEW. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT AT PESCARA, HOWEVER, ZACCAGNINI STEERED A MIDDLE COURSE, MORE CONSISTENT WITH
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THE MAINSTREAM OF THE PARTY'S THINKING. WITH THE PARTY CONGRESS COMING UP EARLY NEXT YEAR, TO THOSE PRESENT AT PESCARA, ZACCAGNINI SOUNDED MORE AND MORE LIKE A CANDIDATE OF BROAD PARTY UNITY. GARDNER

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